

The World

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BOROUGH PRESIDENTS.

Mayor Platt thinks that all the city officials elected on the fusion ticket two years ago are entitled to re-nomination—all except Borough President Cantor. Mr. Platt regards Cantor as "impossible." It is a timely text for a few words about borough presidents and their functions.

Does the public realize how comprehensive the scope of these functions is? As designated by the charter they range from the licensing of cisterns and cesspools and the care and cleaning of city offices to the control of the construction of tunnels and bridges and their maintenance. If streets are to be repaired or repaved on graded or curbed, the Borough President is the man to direct the work. If vacant lots are to be filled in or encumbrances removed or permits issued to builders to open streets, the Borough President is the source of authority. The sewers are his and the care thereof. He is president of all the numerous local boards of improvement; and under him is a superintendent of buildings, whom he appoints and removes at pleasure.

It will be observed from this that the Borough President has many and varied duties and powers. But what makes him sometimes a "bigger man than the Mayor" in semblance of outward authority?

The answer is probably to be found in the lack of exact definition of his jurisdiction, by which he is tempted to assume powers not strictly defined as his. As elective officers, as the representatives of five separate governments within one centralized government, the borough presidents naturally develop a jealousy of their office and its authority. There is before them a constant temptation to interfere in the conduct of city legislation.

It will be recalled that Mr. Coler some years ago pointed out the danger concealed in this divided executive authority and prophesied the "discord interfering with complete consolidation," to quote Andrew H. Green's subsequent characterization of it. Mr. Green, writing at least three years later than Mr. Coler and in the light of an experience of nearly two years with the separate system of borough government, said recently in a World interview, that this system "has set the city all awry" and should be abolished.

A PROPHET IN TROUBLE.

Some years ago a man with a mission bought a printing press and taking up his residence in the town of East Aurora, N. J., began the reform of the world. How valiantly he tilted, lance in rest, against the shams and absurd conventions of constituted society! How relentlessly he exposed and combated the wrongs of civilization! How error, wounded, writhed in pain under his fierce lashings!

We listened to Fra Elbertus Hubbard and wondered and accepted him as a new prophet, though some with lurking doubts referred to him as Fra Elbertus Humbuggus. But we were learning a new scheme of society from him and the scoffers were silenced. His voice was raised in many a village lyceum; his periodical circulated far and near. Young ladies bought it and conned his golden texts with an awakened interest in life. No other prophet in all the land was honored more.

But now we read of this champion of the rights of man, this leader of Roycrofters paying \$3,000 to settle a suit brought for the support of an illegitimate child! The ideal, it seems, had a foot of clay. The high moral principles were not for home application. The prophet, making law for the rest of humanity, felt at liberty to transgress the old Mosaic commandment.

The sad thing is that the scoffers are now permitted to come into the open. It is a painful passing of a prophet.

A CELEBRATED NEW YORKER.

A very interesting New Yorker is on his deathbed; Harris Cohen, the original Baxter street second-hand clothier, is dying.

Cohen is only sixty-two, though it seems as if his fame extended back into a previous generation. He has made several fortunes in business, which he afterward lost in turf ventures and speculative enterprises; as with many other successful business men he pointed the moral of a cobbler sticking to his last. Cohen lived a full life. He was a man of fashion in his leisure hours away from the store and he was generous to the poor. His eight children and twenty-four grandchildren are living witnesses to his hatred of race suicide.

Cohen's success illustrated the potency and persistence of an idea. He had goods to sell and why should he wait for a customer to drift in when a little persuasion might expedite his arrival? Does the angler wait for the trout to leap into his landing net? Cohen put his idea into practice and along with wealth it brought him lasting fame. His "pullers-in" gained national notoriety. The "attractive" and magnetic powers of his clerks aroused wide attention.

The east side will mourn for Harris; it was proud of him, and it will give him a fine funeral.

OPEN CAR MUST STAY.

The proposed abolition of the open trolley car in Brooklyn will excite dismay; the reason alleged will doubtless excite a derisive sympathy. It is that in summer the expenses of the company are largely increased by the damage suits brought by women injured in getting off the cars backward!

If the reason is as averred a campaign of education must be instituted among the women of Brooklyn, corresponding to that begun at Lenox a year ago to teach horses not to be frightened at automobiles. The open car we must have. It is no longer a luxury, but a necessity of surface traction. To banish it will be to revert to the primitive conditions of a past era of trolleys, and this is not to be thought of.

In place of the open car President Winter suggests a closed car "with the windows taken out." This would prove but an inadequate substitute. Its crowding capacity would be limitless and passengers sitting with their backs to air currents would "get it in the neck" in a way to invite summer colds and catarrhs. It is a device not to be recommended.

PROF KUTE PROVES HOW GENEROUS THE OCEAN CARD SHARP CAN BE.

